

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item published in the daily 'Observer' dated 17th July, 2000 under the caption, 'Major Indian Products still facing EU import restriction;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that there is still a restriction on the import of many products manufactured in India, in the countries of European Union;

(c) if so, what are these products and the type of restrictions imposed on their import; and

(d) whether these restrictions are not against the conditions of World Trade Organisation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (b) Yes Sir.

(c) Indian exports to EU markets face a variety of market access barriers. These include quotas in the textiles sector, anti-dumping/anti-subsidy actions, SPS/health regulations in respect of agri/marine products and standards/labelling requirements.

(d) These and other such trade policy measures of the European Union are kept under a watch in order to ascertain their compatibility with WTO Agreements and where necessary, they are taken up with European Union bilaterally and for specific cases in Dispute Settlement Body of WTO.

Bringing the Import of Products in Non-Restricted Area

†1555. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH:

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that trade in the country has been affected

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

in the past months as a result of the declaration made about bringing the import of most of the products in non-restricted areas;

- (b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;
- (c) whether Government have formed a committee at Minister level to study the impact of abundant facility given in import trade;
- (d) if so, the names of the Ministers included in the 'said Committee; and
- (e) by when the Committee would submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) India has been following a consistent policy for gradual removal of restrictions on imports since 1991. Tariff line-wise import policy was first announced on 31.3.1996. As on that date import of 6161 tariff lines (at 10 digit level) out of the total number of 10202 was free. Import restrictions on 488 tariff lines were removed during the period 1.4.96 to 31.3.97. Further 391 tariff lines (at 8 digit level) were freed during the period 1.4.97 to 13.4.98 and 894 tariff lines (at 8 digit level) were freed on 1.4.99. Thus removal of import restrictions on 714 tariff lines as carried out on 31.3.2000 was nothing but the continuation of the stated policy of the Government over the years.

However all imports in the country are subject to applicable rates of Customs duties and also subject to domestic laws, rules, orders, regulations, technical specifications, environmental and safety norms as applicable to domestically produced goods. This should provide adequate protection to the domestic industry.

Further, Government is absolutely determined to ensure through appropriate use of the tariff and other mechanisms that imports do not cause any serious detriment or injury to the domestic industry due to import restrictions removal. Towards that end, Government has increased duties on a numbers of items where a surge in imports was noticed or apprehended.

(c) to (e) Government has constituted an Inter-Ministerial Group under the chairmanship of Commerce Secretary to assess the impact of removal of quantitative restrictions and to suggest suitable

corrective measures on 28.7.2000. Departments/Ministries of Agriculture and Cooperation, Consumer Affairs, Small Scale Industries and Agro & Rural Industries, Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Information Technology, Chemical and Petro-chemicals, Fertilizers, Petroleum and Natural Gas and Animal Husbandry and Dairying have been represented in the Group. The Group is to make its recommendations before the end of the year.

Scope for Export of Marine Products

1556. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have made any assessment about the scope of export of marine products;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) whether there is any proposal to draw up a perspective plan to tap the vast potential of the marine industry for export particularly in shrimp aquaculture?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) As per assessment of the Government, there exists considerable potential for further increasing the export of marine products from India. The thrust areas are (i) increasing coverage of area under aquaculture (ii) increasing share of value added products (iii) modernisation of processing plants including equipment and machinery (iv) prevention of disease in shrimp farms (v) improvement of marine products industry related infrastructure and (vi) improving the quality of marine products exported from India etc.

(c) There does exist a strategy to augment the export of marine products from India but an exercise has been started again to frame indicative medium term plans for overall export strategy including shrimp aquaculture for the period 2001—2006.